

**Quick Summary:** This section provides program and policy recommendations to assist in making Bryson City a more pedestrian-friendly community. Recommendations cover the E's of pedestrian planning: Encouragement, Education, Enforcement, and Engineering.

## Section 7. Program and Policy Recommendations

### 7.1. Introduction

In addition to physical facilities, it is also important to have strong programs and policies which encourage making the Town more pedestrian-friendly. Programs often fall into one of the four E's of pedestrian planning: Encouragement, Enforcement, Education, and Engineering, and can encourage pedestrian-friendly behavior and more walking in the Town. Similarly, policies can encourage pedestrian-friendly development and design. The following section provides recommendations for some of the programs and policies which the Town can consider implementing to become more pedestrian-friendly.

### 7.2. Program Recommendations

Pedestrian facilities alone do not make a town pedestrian-friendly; a variety of programs can also be implemented to create and support a pedestrian-friendly culture. A pedestrian-friendly culture has several different characteristics, including the behavior of the people in the town, the attitude of motorists in the town towards pedestrians, and the role of police and other law officials to enforce pedestrian safety. For this reason, programs are often created to fit within the three non-construction E's of pedestrian planning: education, encouragement, and enforcement. Education programs teach others about safe pedestrian behaviors, the benefits of walking, and are necessary to assist people in feeling more comfortable with their "new" mode of travel. Education programs can also be used to teach motorists how to interact safely with pedestrians. Encouragement programs, like education programs, can also teach about the benefits of walking and serve to promote walking and pedestrian-friendly behavior through activities and incentives. Finally, enforcement programs provide the "teeth" of creating a safe and legal pedestrian environment. When law enforcement officers and other officials protect pedestrians and encourage walking, this sends a clear message that the presence of pedestrians is a legitimate and permanent condition in the Town's transportation network.

The following items are some programs the Town should consider implementing to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

- ◆ **Self-guided Walking Tour.** (*Encouragement*)

Walkabouts and Historic Walking Tours are very useful tools for encouraging walking in a Town, and also for improving the marketability and attraction of the Town to visitors. Already the Town has developed a "Turtle Walking Trail" which is advertised at the Visitor's Bureau/Chamber of Commerce. The Turtle Walking Trail was designed to take pedestrians past a variety of historic and notable locations in Hertford, including historic

homes, the waterfront, and landmarks. The Walking Trail is designated by turtle-shaped stencils painted onto the ground. Participants in the Trail follow these stencils from one stop to the next. It is recommended that Hertford continue to support this activity and advertise it as best possible to visitors through the Visitor Bureau, local restaurants, and other potential locations for visitors. The Town should make sure that the Trail connects to locations such as Missing Mill Park and a nice view location for the S-Bridge. After more sidewalk and intersection improvements have been made, the Town could even consider extending the Trail out to the shopping area at the intersection of Church St. and US 17, and beyond to the Recreation Center.

♦ **Safe Routes to School Program.** (*Education and Encouragement*)

According to the Federal Highway Administration's website for Safe Routes to School, in 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, however, over half of all children arrive at school in private automobiles and only 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or bicycling<sup>1</sup>. As a response to these dramatic statistics, the Safe Routes to School Program was designed to create and promote safe walking and cycling to school. Its goals are to improve safety near schools, promote active lifestyles, and reduce pollution and congestion caused by school traffic.

In North Carolina, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, has established the North Carolina Safe Routes to School program, which is a state-wide program to promote safe walking and bicycling to elementary and middle schools in North Carolina. The North Carolina Safe Routes to School program provides opportunities for schools to apply for funding for both programs and capital improvement projects to encourage walking and cycling to school. The program also conducts Safe Routes to School training sessions to be at interested schools to assist with planning and preparation of an extended Safe Routes to School effort at the school. This free training session brings together school administrators, faculty, staff, and representatives from related agencies such as health departments, law enforcement, engineering, and town planning, to educate them about Safe Routes to School, its purpose, and techniques that can be used to create a successful program. Once the training session has been conducted, the school will be prepared to start an effective Safe Routes to School program and is eligible to apply for grants for both programs and capital improvements.

It is recommended that Hertford join with Perquimans County Public Schools to start a Safe Routes to School program at Hertford Grammar School, located within town limits.

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<sup>1</sup> FHWA Safety: Safe Routes to School Program. <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>



**Figure 7-1. The Indian Summer Festival is an annual Hertford event.** A 5K usually accompanies it.



**Figure 7-2. Parents at a Safe Routes to School workshop in New Jersey discuss improvements to their school.** Safe Routes to School workshops are being conducted across the nation to promote children's health and a better environment.

This program could help to target some of the school's much needed projects, such as connections to the High School. Although high schools are not funded by the national Safe Routes to School Program, the Town should also consider evaluating ways to make it safer for students to walk to Perquimans County High School as well.

- ♦ **Annual 5K Walk/Run.** *(Education and Encouragement)*  
An annual 5K is conducted in Hertford as part of the Indian Summer Festival. The Town should continue to support this event because it raises awareness about walking and running in Hertford. It also attracts visitors to the downtown Hertford area and promotes exercise and a more active lifestyle. The Annual 5K could be used as a tool to annually evaluate the running/walking conditions of downtown Hertford.
- ♦ **Walking/Running Trail with Mile Markers and Exercise Stations.** *(Education and Encouragement)*  
The Perquimans Trailblazers group, a Hertford-based organization whose mission is to enhance the quality of life in Perquimans County by developing a system of land and water trails, has been working to develop a permanent walking/running trail which would have mile markers and exercise stations. The mile markers would be useful for runners and walkers to measure the distance they have traveled. The exercise stations may attract more runners and walkers who are interested in a more varied workout. The Town should consider helping the Perquimans Trailblazers Group to develop this facility because it would provide another recreation facility for residents, encourage residents to be more physically active, and it would also be an additional attraction for visitors.
- ♦ **Connections to the Blueway.** *(Encouragement)*  
In addition to the walking/running trail, the Perquimans Trailblazers is also working on creating a blueway trail along the Perquimans River. The Town should consider reinforcing pedestrian connections to put-ins along the blueway so that paddlers who have stopped for the day can walk to destinations in town. This will encourage visitors, and will also encourage more walking in Town. The Town should consider sidewalk connectivity as well as intersection safety and convenience when making improvements.
- ♦ **Police Education.** *(Enforcement)*  
A little enforcement can go a long way, but not if the enforcer is unaware of the appropriate behavior in a given situation. It is recommended that Hertford consider providing a short course for police officers to brush up on their pedestrian rights and safe behaviors so that they can enforce such behavior within town. Thus, educated officers will become ambassadors to teach Hertford residents and visitors the appropriate

pedestrian behavior. In addition, Hertford should be sure to distribute information about pedestrian laws in North Carolina to both local residents and police officers. The laws and a guidebook for them are available at the following websites:

Laws: [www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/laws/laws\\_pedlaws.html](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/laws/laws_pedlaws.html)

Guide: [www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/laws/resources/BikePedLawsGuidebook-Full.pdf](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/laws/resources/BikePedLawsGuidebook-Full.pdf)

♦ **Pedestrian Counts on Major Thoroughfares.** *(Evaluation)*

The Town should develop a program to take annual pedestrian counts at specific locations in order to measure the increase in volume of pedestrian over time as the town implements the Pedestrian Plan and its improvements and programs. This will help the Town to evaluate the success of its program and its improvements as well as to determine if there are additional improvements that are needed. Recommended locations for pedestrian counts include:

1. Intersection of Church and Market Street
2. Intersection of Church and US 17
3. Intersection of Church and Berry Street
4. Intersection of King Street and Hyde Park Street
5. Grubb Street in front of Missing Mill Park
6. S. Edenton Road Street in front of the High School
7. Dobbs Street in front of Hertford Grammar School

In addition, counts along the S-bridge should be made once sidewalk has been installed.

♦ **Sidewalk construction program.** *(Engineering)*

Many municipalities develop an on-going sidewalk construction program to assist in closing the gaps in their sidewalk connectivity. This program is annually funded by the Town's budget, and builds small pieces of sidewalk which may be missing from major routes to connect destinations. Hertford should consider developing a similar program to accrue over time a budget for installing sidewalk and greenways to provide additional necessary connections between existing destinations.

♦ **Sidewalk maintenance program.** *(Engineering)*

In addition to a sidewalk construction program, many municipalities also have an annual sidewalk maintenance program which is included in the Town budget. The maintenance program should address improving existing sidewalk connections by replacing cracked sidewalk, re-striping crosswalks, and removing debris and obstacles from sidewalk. A sidewalk maintenance program is important because it helps to make the existing pedestrian facilities more comfortable and convenient for pedestrians.

- ◆ **Intersection improvement program.** *(Engineering)*

Similar to the sidewalk construction program, the intersection improvement program should be an annually budgeted program to upgrade intersections to make them more pedestrian-friendly. At un-signalized intersections, crosswalks should be striped and signs should be installed to alert motorists to the presence of pedestrians. At signalized intersections, pedestrian signals, crosswalks, and amenities such as pedestrian countdown signals should be installed. The intersection improvement program, along with the sidewalk construction and maintenance programs, should provide Hertford with a methodical and funded way to build necessary pedestrian facilities.

### **7.3. Policy Recommendations**

In addition to programs, policies are also useful to help encourage pedestrians. The following are some policy recommendations which the Town should consider implementing to make itself more pedestrian-friendly.

- ◆ **Require new development to construct sidewalk and connect to existing sidewalk as well as adjacent developments.** While Hertford has had limited new development in the past, there is still the potential for future development given the Town's growth as a major visitor destination. When development does occur, the Town should have ordinances in place which will require the development to have pedestrian amenities including sidewalks, crosswalks, and connections to existing sidewalk. This will encourage a more walkable form of development which will both promote a healthier, more active lifestyle among residents and visitors, and also reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. In particular the guidelines in the two overlay districts, the US 17 Overlay District and the Neighborhood Corridor District, should be especially robust in requiring pedestrian facilities and accommodations.
- ◆ **Consider requiring new development to set aside land for greenways.** Many municipalities require developers to set aside land for greenways as part of their development impact fee for parks and recreation facilities. After the Town adopts a formal pedestrian plan, it should consider doing the same. In addition, the Town should require developers to provide connections to existing greenways as they are constructed to allow for better connectivity in the Town's pedestrian system.
- ◆ **Require all new signals to include pedestrian signal heads and crosswalks.** One of the major barriers to pedestrian connectivity in any town is the ability to cross the street. The Town should require all new signals to have pedestrian signal heads and

crosswalks to accommodate pedestrians and plan for future conditions in which pedestrians may be walking through the intersection.

- ◆ **Assure Safe Pedestrian Access through Parking Lots.** Parking lots can be some of the most unfriendly locations for pedestrians due to their very nature of being a place where both vehicles and pedestrians mix. When new development is constructed, or existing development is renovated, parking lots should be evaluated for appropriate pedestrian-safe design. Some features that should be included are pedestrian refuges, sidewalk, and pedestrian-only access from the parking lot to store fronts. Parking lot requirements should be flexible enough to allow for unconventional locations for off-street parking, such as behind a building, or shared with another commercial development. For a more thorough description of appropriate parking lot design, see *Section 5.7 Parking Lot Design*.
- ◆ **Encourage Mixed-Use and Other Pedestrian-Friendly Developments.** While the capacity of Hertford to grow is somewhat limited in geographic range, the Town will continue to experience new, private-sector development of homes, businesses, and retail centers. The way in which these uses are arranged, their proximity to one another, and their design are critical to the promotion of walking as a viable means of transportation. The “push-pull” diagram at right (Figure 3) illustrates development policies that hinder or promote well-designed pedestrian spaces; many of these factors support crime prevention and public safety goals. Excellent resources that the Town can utilize to develop management guidelines include the following:
  - **Project for Public Spaces ([www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)).** PPS is a non-profit center founded on the principal of making public spaces better places to be in for pedestrians (and users of all modes of travel). They provide technical and training resources.
  - **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Neighborhood Development ([www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148](http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148)).** Still a pilot program, the U.S. Green Building Council offers a criteria manual that can serve as a checklist for Hertford to help private development create great neighborhoods for people. Location, car dependence, conservation, walkable streets, and compact design are some of the elements that can serve as a menu for a point system to enhance new developments, rather than a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all ordinance requirement.
  - **Connectivity Requirements (for example, [www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm116.htm](http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm116.htm)).** The foundation concept behind any walkable area is the number of places that a person can reach (by foot) in a given amount of time. By

Push (Promote Walking)	Pull (Hinder Walking)
Interconnected Neighborhoods	Cul-de-sac development
Mix of Land Uses	Single-Purpose Neighborhoods
Maximum Block Lengths of 500 feet	Long, “superblock” Streets More than 1,000 Feet in Length
Pedestrian Cross-Access	Unconnected Developments
Well-Lit Spaces Open to View from Passersby	Dark Spaces Hidden from View
Minimum Driveway Spacing Standards	Uncontrolled Driveways Spaced Frequently
Attractive Street Design and Streetscaping	Blank Walls, Large Parking Areas, and Uninteresting Spaces
High-Speed Right Turns	Small Corner Radii

**Figure 3. Factors that Promote or Hinder Walking in a Community.**

requiring a high level of connectivity of new developments for surrounding streets, Hertford can ensure that their public spaces remain not only walkable, but will have redundant access to emergency services; produce lower fuel use and emissions; and preserve roadway capacity by allowing walking and vehicular trips to occur more on local streets instead of congested arterials.

#### **7.4. Summary**

By implementing these programs and policies, along with the recommended projects, Hertford should be on its way to becoming a more pedestrian-friendly location. While the projects will provide the facilities necessary to walk safely in the Town, the programs and policies will work to encourage more pedestrians and increase walking in the Town. The dual approach of projects, plus programs and policies, will be a strong influence in making Hertford a pedestrian-friendly place.